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WAR SUFFERERS'
RELIEF BULLETIN

"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

February, 1946 — **Vol. 1, No. 12**

England in Retrospect

By John Coffman

Our relief efforts in England began in December of 1939 when the Lord opened the door and Brother Amos Swartzentruber made the first inquiries concerning the needs of the relief field. In May of 1940 Brother Ted Klassen entered England from France and continued the work which Brother Swartzentruber had begun —administering help in a number of needy areas.

In October of 1940 I was sent to England to assist Brother Klassen and to continue the work after his return to America. We labored together for a time in making further investigation and giving immediate assistance to urgent needs which thrust themselves upon us, namely, the support of seventy to one hundred Polish boys who had escaped from Europe, and in December, 1940, our first major project was begun. This was in "Wickhurst Manor" near Sevenoaks, Kent, where a residential nursery for evacuated children from two to five years of age was established.

In the same month, our first shipment of clothing to reach us from the United States was immediately distributed, some being taken to Coventry and Birmingham, which had suffered in the air raids. Some help was also given at this time to the members of the Society of Brothers of Hutterians who had arranged to migrate to Paraguay through the assistance of the Mennonite Central Committee. In May of 1940 a Mobile Canteen was donated to the city of Birmingham for use after air raids with the provision that the workers be supplied by the Mennonite Central Committee to work with the canteen. Peter Dyck arrived from Canada for this purpose in July, 1941.

"Woodlands" and "South Meadow"

In September of this year, with the assistance of Brother Dyck and in cooperation with the Friends War Relief Service, an evacuation home for aged and infirm people was established and equipped at the "Woodlands," Wolverhampton. This provided a peaceful haven for from thirty to thirty-five people.

The next major project was at "South Meadow," Abergele, on the North Wales coast, about forty miles from Liverpool. This provided a convalescent home for babies six months to five years of age from Liverpool, and also operated by the Liverpool Child Welfare Association.

In August, 1942, Frieda Klassen from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Edna Hunsperger from Kitchener, Ontario, arrived in England to give service in our projects. Sister Klassen was assigned to work with the babies at "South Meadow" and Sister Hunsperger, after several months of preliminary service and experience in a nursery and old people's home, was installed at the "Woodlands" to help care for the old people there. In the meantime, Peter Dyck with our utility van (or station wagon) had given aid to bombed-out people in the cities of Bath and Exeter and also maintained supervisory contact with the "Woodlands" and "South Meadow" projects.

"Taxal Edge"

As a result of further investigations by Brother Dyck, it was felt that we could meet a great need and give a distinct Christian witness by establishing a convalescent home for boys to be carried on under the authority of our own organization in England. A suitable location was found at "Taxal Edge," Whaley Bridge, in the "Peak District" of England, about twenty miles south of Manchester.

During the summer of 1943 the first boys were admitted to the home. Frieda Klassen was transferred from "South Meadow" to take charge of the nursing duties at "Taxal Edge." Twenty boys were maintained at the home for periods ranging from three weeks to two or three months as required in each case. Three English workers were secured to assist Brother Dyck and Sister Klassen in the operation of the home.

London Center

In the latter part of August, 1943, Brother Ernest Bennett arrived. He spent nearly three months with our workers in reviewing the nature of the work already carried on and in assisting and formulating plans for our further efforts in England and for developing our prospects for speedy entry into needy areas in Europe as soon as the way should open. As a result of these plans, a house was secured in London by means of which we could extend our services in that area to include a home for children temporarily unprovided for, owing to emergency situations in their family affairs. This home was also to provide a much-needed hostel in London and residence for our director and headquarters' staff, and a home to which we could invite our young Mennonite brethren who were in England—some serving in a civilian fire-fighting organization, others from noncombatant corps in both the Canadian and United States armies, as well as to some few who were in the active fighting services.

Our clothing depot and office quarters were established and after the arrival of Brother Glen Miller, who served as director of the England unit from February, 1944, to January, 1945, we provided in the London Center a temporary home for fifteen children from the ages of four months to seventeen years. Sister Edna Hunsperger was established in the London Center as its matron in May, 1944.

Personnel Changes and Additions

During the summer of 1944 Mabel Cressman from Kitchener, Ontario, Vernon Toews from Altona, Manitoba, Canada, John Thut from Chicago, Illinois, and Ellen Harder from Whitewater, Kansas, arrived to assist as members of the England unit. Sister Cressman took up her duties as nurse at the "Woodlands" and Sister Harder in a similar capacity at "South Meadow." Brother Toews served as cook at "Taxal Edge" and Brother Thut assumed duties as Welfare Director of the boys until his transfer to the Prisoner of War Aid Section of the International Y.M.C.A. at the beginning of 1945.

In December, 1944, Brother Sam J. Goering arrived to take over his duties as Director of the England unit and of the larger area of Northwest Europe. During this month Brother J. N. Byler also came to London on his way home to America from Egypt and he reviewed the projects being undertaken at that time. In February, 1945, Peter Dyck and his wife, the former Frieda Klassen, secured a temporary home in a hostel for five hundred Dutch children who were maintained in England by the Dutch government.

My wife and I transferred our activities from the London Center to "Taxal Edge" to assume charge of the project there until August of 1945. Ellen Harder was also called to serve as nurse at "Taxal Edge" and Vernon Toews transferred to the London Center to serve as general assistant until the way opened for him to enter service in France during the early summer of 1945.

Late in 1944, Henry Buller, former relief worker in France, came to the London Center and engaged in work preparatory to his entry into France in April of 1945. Elma Esau, who had given assistance in the various clothing depots in Canada and the United States, also assisted in the London Center until she with Brother and Sister Dyck was able to enter Holland.

In July, 1945, Sister Harder was transferred to France and her place as nurse at "Taxal Edge" was taken by Martha

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Thinking about Relief

A large portion of this issue of the **War Sufferers' Relief Bulletin** is devoted to the work in England. Much of the material was dictated by Brother John Coffman during a recent visit to Akron. Brother and Sister Coffman returned to Canada in the middle of December, 1945, after giving over five years of service in England. At the present time only two projects are continuing in England—"Taxal Edge" and the London Center. The latter provides headquarters for the Northwest European area and living quarters for the workers connected with it as well as for workers passing through England en route to the continent. Several of the workers at the Center are engaged in purchasing equipment in England for use in Holland and France. Howard Yoder, Wooster, Ohio, arrived in December, 1945, to serve as director of the England unit and assistant director of the Northwest European area. Workers arriving in England during the last few months are: Mary Emma Showalter, who is serving as dietitian in the London Center and at "Taxal Edge"; Fred Peters and Harry Willems, who are at "Taxal Edge," and Cornelius Dyck, who is assisting in the activities of the London Center. Edna Hunsperger has completed her term of service and, as this is written, is en route to her home in Canada.

Letter of Appreciation

Our major area of clothing distribution in England was through the widow of the captain of a British battleship which was sunk in 1943 with a loss of many lives, to the very needy families of the men who were lost. The following letter was sent to our workers by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, as an expression of appreciation for the help given to these people.

Buckingham Palace
12th February, 1945

The Queen commands me to write and say that Her Majesty recently saw Mrs. Cooke, widow of the Captain of H.M.S. **Barham,** and in course of conversation Mrs. Cooke told the Queen of the very real help you have always given in connection with the care of the wives, mothers, and children of the gallant men lost in the **Barham.**

I am now to convey to you Her Majesty's thanks for the help which you are rendering Mrs. Cooke, for the Queen feels strongly that her work, which is so essentially personal by nature, is doing much to comfort and succour many sorrowing families through the cruel years of war, and Her Majesty likes to think that Mrs. Cooke, by helping the relatives to feel they are part of one large family party, is doing all that is possible to overcome that sense of loneliness which comes to those who suffer great personal loss.

Mrs. Cooke was so appreciative of your help when speaking of her work to the Queen. Yours sincerely,

Katharine Seymour.

ENGLAND IN RETROSPECT

(Continued from page 2)

Rupel from Los Angeles, California, who was loaned to the Mennonite Central Committee by the Brethren Service Committee. In August, George Neufeld from Leamington, Ontario, and Susie Peters from Niagara Falls, Ontario, arrived at "Taxal Edge" to take over the work there from Sister Coffman and me, and Evangeline Matthies from Virgil, Ontario, took over the work of matron at the London Center.

In the early spring of 1945 our project at "Wickhurst Manor" was discontinued, owing to the cessation of hostilities in Europe, rendering the evacuation of the children unnecessary. At this time also the old people's home at "Woodlands," Wolverhampton, was taken over entirely by a committee of a Friends monthly meeting in central England. At this time Sister Cressman was transferred to take charge of the children at the London Center until October, when the work of the children's home was discontinued. The Liverpool Child Welfare Association took over the entire support of the convalescent home for babies in "South Meadow." Sister Cressman was then transferred to serve as nurse at "Taxal Edge," thereby allowing Sister Rupel to resume her work under the Brethren Service Committee at their center in Paris, France.

In response to a recent ad, "If Thine enemy Hunger, Feed Him," placed in a series of U.S. newspapers by a national group of Quakers, 21,000 letters of approval were received, $23,000 in unsolicited gifts, and 24 protests.—Worldover Press.

Clothing Distribution in England

During all the years from December, 1940, until the present time the distribution of clothing has continued to a greater or lesser extent according to the varying needs of the times as determined by the amount of bombing from which the country suffered. In September of 1941 an English worker was secured to assist in the clothing depot. Her work was supplemented in February, 1943, by an additional worker. A considerable amount of clothing was distributed as "unopened bales" to various welfare organizations in large cities of Coventry, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bath, and Exeter, especially during our first two years of work in England. Later it was distributed through individual welfare workers and church organizations throughout London in bales of specially selected clothing from our depot which were made up to meet the specific needs as they were described to us by these welfare workers. Considerable clothing was distributed to refugees from the continent who were in England through the Relief Society for British Refugees and through the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends. Clothing and bedding were also supplied to supplement the work of our projects and to hostels and children's nurseries maintained by other organizations. Some of the clothing was given to hostels for "difficult" children and was so gladly received as a great help in raising the morals and the social behavior of these children. Among the hostels supplied with emergency stocks of clothing were those caring for Spanish refugee children who were left stranded in England from the beginning of the war. At various occasions as requested by the committee in charge of these children, funds were supplied to meet urgent needs as the situations necessitating them arose. Among the committees receiving clothing was that organized by the Belgian Government in London to help their refugees in England. A considerable amount of clothing was also distributed through some of the churches in the badly bombed east end of London. — John Coffman.

Explanation of Map

The map on the opposite page shows the location of Mennonite relief projects since the work was first begun in England. The map was drawn by Horace Winter, English worker at the London Center. The explanation given below was compiled by John Coffman and gives the names of the workers who are or were at some time assigned to the project during its operation.

Abergele—"South Meadow," babies' convalescent home—Klassen, Harder

Bath—Air raid victims—Dyck

Birmingham—Mobile canteen, air raid victims—Dyck

Caerleon—Spanish boys' hostel

Cardiff—Belgian refugees

Chelmsford—Residential nursery—Harder

Coventry—Air raid victims

Exeter—Air raid victims—Dyck

Leeds—Air raid victims

Liverpool—P.S.U.

London — Headquarters and emergency home—Klassen, J. & E. Coffman, Miller, Hunsperger, Buller, Toews, Esau, Showalter, Matthies, C. Dyck, Thut, Hartzler, Goering, Loewen

Oxfordshire—Hostels for evacuee children

Manchester—Air raid victims, P.S.U.

Plymouth—Basque children billeting

Sheffield—Air raid victims

Skisdon—Friends Relief Service host—Hunsperger

Sevenoaks—Residential nursery

Southampton—Air raid relief fund

West Heathly — "Highcroft" residential nursery

Whaley Bridge—"Taxal Edge" convalescent home for boys—Dyck, Klassen, Toews, Thut, J. & E. Coffman, Harder, Ruper, S. Peters, Neufeld, Willems, F. Peters.

Wolverhampton — "The Woodlands" old people's home — Dyck, Hunsperger, Cressman

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Suffering on a mass scale hitherto unknown throughout all history exists in China today. In what **was** occupied China at least 13,000,000 people have already been found without adequate clothing or any means of subsistence.

—Charles Edison in "News of China"

MAP
of
ENGLAND
LEEDS
LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER
SHEFFIELD
WHALEY BRIDGE
ABERGELE
WOLVERHAMPTON
BIRMINGHAM
COVENTRY
CHELMSFORD
OXFORD
CAERLEON
LONDON
CARDIFF
BATH
SEVENOAKS
WEST HOATHLY
SOUTHAMPTON
EXETER
SKISDON
PLYMOUTH
Symbols
Homes and nurseries maintained
Major centers receiving clothing
Funds supplied for relief purposes
Personal service by M.C.C. workers

China Notes

Chengchow will likely be the place of headquarters of the M.C.C. workers, and in view of that we have arranged a few things these days. Leaving Chungking December 14 and arriving here in Chengchow January 8 caused us to travel in midwinter for nearly a month; but we did not have any real cold weather during this time. After arriving here we noticed the cold more, and therefore appreciate the accommodation of heated rooms.

—P. P. Baltzer.

War Sufferers in China

War-scarred China, suffering from an acute shortage of coal, clothing, transportation facilities, medicines, and building material, is due for a bleak and dreary winter, declared Dr. T. F. Tsiang, chairman of the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, in a recent press conference.

Dr. Tsiang said: "People are dying by the thousands per day in malaria-infested Formosa. Typhus is rampant in Nanking. Millions of people in North China and Manchuria are in rags. Years of natural calamities and war have hard hit Honan Province. Most of the buildings in Kweilin, Liuchow, Changsha, Hengyank, Laohokow, Ichang, and Hankow have been destroyed. Drought in Kansu has decimated its crops by seventy per cent. China's millions who have just emerged from the war are faced with problems no less serious than those brought about by war."—Chinese News Service.

How Relief Helps

Those who see relief of hunger as nothing more than the restoration of the needy individual, might ponder what happened in Tangshan, North China, when flour began to reach there through the efforts of U.N.R.R.A. Tangshan is the center of essential coal mining, and any drop in coal production is immediately reflected in such important industrial cities as Peiping, Tientsin, and Shanghai, which lean heavily on Tangshan fuel. Weakened miners found their usual tasks beyond their strength, but they flocked back to the mines when payment for labor was made in flour. Hence coal production, which in late November was at the rate of 30,000 tons weekly, rose sharply to 55,000 tons. This is only one illustration of the way in which relief of hunger breaks the vicious circle which holds back all forms of rehabilitation.—Worldover Press.

Notes from the Field

From France

With the arrival of Clifford Lavers and Beatrice Buller on the field, our number of delegates has risen to fourteen. Six workers are assigned to the four children's homes, two are working at the Chalon Center (household, etc.), three are in administrative tasks, two assuring the transportation, and one directing the clothing program. During the past month (January) two shipments of Canadian and American clothing have been sent to Mennonite communities in Alsace-Lorraine and eastern France. In each center a Mennonite minister was designated as being responsible for appointing a local committee to assist in the distribution.—From European News Notes.

Transportation of Relief Goods

The reactions of the driver in a relief team are many and are determined by the numerous situations he encounters. Moving goods to the front lines, as it were, creates a satisfaction which can be appreciated only when experienced. Then, too, the joy of taking truckloads of rowdy children to the clothing depot is rather thrilling. To catch the gleam of jubilant gratefulness in their restless eyes strikes a chord within one's self to ring long afterward. Let me pass on to you the secret of our cheerful service. 'Tis this: "We are but conscious of our Father's care. To Him we commit our lives, our work, and all we have. He guides our work and, I love to think, He guides our trucks."—Siegfried Janzen.

From Ethiopia

One day I went out visiting with one of the older missionaries here and at one place we saw a tiny baby, just able to sit up, at the corner of the house, on the ground, seemingly contented. When we came nearer I saw that its hands were full of blisters as though it might have fallen into the fire which is a part of every house, occupying a large place in the one room of which the houses consist. The fires are built right on the mud floor and here the cooking is done. Baby must have crawled too near. It had a miserable look on its face, flies crawling about freely. Its ragged dress came only to its waist, and here I was with a coat on and none too warm.—Nancy Hernley.

Peace Notes

Atlantic City Conference

About twenty peace church groups and pacifist organizations met in Atlantic City, February 12 to 14, to explore the possibility of carrying on several peace activities jointly, to consider the type of machinery necessary, and to study financial potentials. Several M.C.C. delegates including the vice-chairman and the secretary of the Peace Section sat in on the conference, more or less as observers. By action of the group a Consultative Council was provided for to serve as a clearinghouse for problems and concerns of interest to all groups. A smaller body, the Service agency, will direct the work of a staff in carrying out the joint projects. Four projects were decided upon as being ones which should be initiated first; others may be added later. The four are: (1) Publication of a factual newsletter from Washington, carrying items of interest to the peace groups; (2) Publication of a clip sheet for editors; (3) Inauguration of a publicity program by a qualified person who will be able to write, and get into the press, material which will further the cause of pacifism; (4) Sponsorship of a research program. Though the M.C.C. cannot support all these projects, there will undoubtedly be an area of significant service for these activities.

No Four Freedoms Without Food

The University of Minnesota has just about wound up a series of experiments with special interest in relation to the problem of concentration camp victims and the starved peoples of Europe. The experiment began with the scientific, controlled starvation of a number of volunteer conscientious objectors. Thirty-four of them were put on a concentration camp diet until they lost about twenty-five per cent of their weight. That, of course, is not as much weight as the inmates of Belsen lost, but it does approximate the weight loss of the average civilian Hollander. During the starvation period, each conscientious objector was fed not more than 1,800 calories a day. The normal amount for the work the boys did was 3,200. As the starvation progressed, it was observed that the human guinea pigs became irritable and their weakness was great. They lost 30 to 40 per cent of their strength. But, with their apathy even greater than their irritability, they didn't show their anger; just "sat and stewed."

Following the low point of starvation, the boys were started on the road to recovery with a diet of 4,000 calories a day —twice as much as relief agencies allow. The build-up diets, however, were kept very simple, containing only grain, potatoes, and cabbage.

At the end of the experiment, Doctor Ancel Keys, in charge of the government-sponsored experiment, drew a conclusion much more general than a mere report on the physical condition of the volunteers. Said he: "It's nonsense to think you can starve people and make them believe in the four freedoms at the same time . . . . To talk about the will of the people when you aren't feeding them is nonsense."

—Knickerbocker Weekly.

THE CHRISTIAN AND CONSCRIPTION

By Edward Yoder and Don Smucker

Biblical Background
History of Conscription
The Mennonite Experience with Conscription to 1940
Critique of Conscription
Critique of Civilian Public Service 1940-45
Ought the Church Administer Alternate Service?
Unacceptable Forms of Conscription
Charting Our Postwar Course

It is the aim and purpose of this brief booklet to assist Christians in their thinking and studying on this subject. Price: Single copies, 25c; in quantities of 25 or more, 15c. Order from M.C.C., Akron, Pennsylvania.

"Give Ye Them to Eat"

"But Jesus said . . . , Give ye them to eat. And they say . . . , We have here but five loaves . . . . He said, Bring them hither to me" (Matt. 14:16-18).

He might have turned the stones to bread,
  Who once had made the water wine,
Or called the manna down from heaven
  To show His power divine;

But, "Give ye them to eat," He said,
  And took His servants' little store;
Though scarce enough for one it seemed,
  He blessed and made it more.

And so He let them share with Him
  His joy, His work of feeding men,
And all they gave Him He returned
  A thousandfold again.

Here in the wilderness today
  The starving nations wait for bread;
And still He said, "Give ye to them
  And let the world be fed."

What matter though our loaves be few?
  Alike the little and the much
When He shall add to what we have
  His multiplying touch.

Bring Him thy bread, though scant it seem,
  To satisfy thy daily need;
When He shall take, and bless, and break,
  The hungering world may feed.

—Annie Johnson Flint.

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